VOL. 12 NO. 17
OCTOBER 1982
ISSUE NO. 253

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

80¢

(D) 10-22-82

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FIRST CLASS

LETTERS

I enjoyed Mr. Zullig's account of the LAKE SHORE LTD, but would like to point out some things about the Cleveland area he is not informed of. The present new (1978) half-million dollar Lake Front Station is just as nice as the new Albany station--he mentioned nothing about it. For Cleveland-area residents (population 2 million), the Lake Front Station is easily reached from 20 miles away--east or west by freeways and from the suburbs to the south by freeways. There is easy accessibility, free parking, complete security for your car, and, repeating, convenience of access for the area. The old terminal provides traffic jams, no parking, and a high rate of crime, and no railroad tracks.

Thank you--for only two trains a day we like our Amtrak station right where it is. This is 1982, not 1948. There is also always plenty of cab service available. I take the day and night trains to and from Chicago about five or six times a year. Even in the dead of winter, with a 12:30am arrival from Chicago, cabs are available. We have two trains per day serving Cleveland, but 100 + airliners.

Now about the LAKE SHORE LTD--heaps of praise. Well again this is 1982--not 1948-1955 when I was riding the New York Central and service was still good; before Perlman and Penn Central and all that jazz. Even the Nickel Plate trains were better than the LAKE SHORE LIMITED today, and I'm a LAKE SHORE fan. What a train we could have if Budd were to rebuild today--and not those damned Amfleet I or II things, but real long-distance overnight type cars.

If you want the Boston-New York-Cleveland-Chicago business crowd, you give them first class equipment--not

(continued on page 23)

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Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $19.00 per year; single copy 80¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Southern California; Jack Ferry, Illinois; Adron Hall, Mississippi; Kenneth Maylath, Maryland; Peter Roehm, Massachusetts.

THE COVER STORY

The State of California's Office of Appropriate Technology recently published an Occasional Paper entitled "Transformation of Transportation." This drawing is taken from that paper, and it is described by the OAT as follows: "Typical suburban station as it might appear in the 1990s. The structure could be entirely heated and electrified by the sun. Lightweight, bicycle-carrying intercity trains connect with private cars, dial-a-ride neighborhood vans, taxis and boulevard buses; including open-topped double deckers. Light rail vehicles shown in the foreground could operate down the center of a shopping mall." The Occasional Paper was designed "to aid imaginative dialog--both within and without State government--concerning the future of California transportation." It was written and illustrated by Christopher C. Swan. OAT is located at 1600 Ninth Street, Sacramento CA 95814.

★ CRESCENT HITS TRUCK AND DERAILS

Amtrak's southbound CRESCENT, train 19, struck an empty tractor-trailer truck whose brakes had failed, derailing all but one car of the 11-car, 2-engine train. The accident occurred Oct 6 at Stewart, Alabama, 22 miles south of Tuscaloosa, at 12:30pm. One report said that the truck struck the second engine of the train. The truck driver escaped injury. Sixteen people on the train--8 crew and 8 passengers--were reported injured (a newspaper report said 10 were injured). The train remained upright except for three cars in mid-train which were leaning severely. There was no panic among the passengers. Injured persons were taken to a hospital in Tuscaloosa, while about 30 uninjured passengers were taken to the Moundville City Hall, where they were offered sandwiches, cookies and soft drinks. The train was reportedly carrying 42 passengers and 14 crew. Engineer W. M. Davis said it was his first accident in 40 years with Southern Railway. The train was reportedly traveling at a fairly slow speed at the time, altho it was in 79mph territory.

Consist of the derailed train was: engines 328 and 256 (F40s); cars 1223, 1622, 4634, 4707, 4628, 4731, 4625, 3119, 8506, 2431, and 2923. Damages were initially estimated at $635,000.

The northbound CRESCENT was blocked by the wreck, and passengers from it were bused on, while the train was hauled back to Meridian MS and terminated. Greyhound buses were called from Birmingham AL and Jackson MS to bus No. 20's passengers. One bus ran express to Washington; one bus ran express to Atlanta, then made local stops to Washington; and one bus ran local stops to Atlanta. Due to late departure, the buses could not make the connection with train 82, the SILVER STAR, at Columbia SC. Ten passengers elected to wait for the next day's northbound CRESCENT, and they were put up in hotels in Meridian.

A temporary track was built around the derailment scene, and the next day's CRESCENTS used it, with a 10mph speed restriction. The following day, it was reported that four persons remained hospitalized: 3 Amtrak employees and one passenger. The damaged cars were being sent to Beech Grove Shop for repair from Akron AL via Southern, L&N and Conrail.

Passengers from the derailed train were bused to Meridian, where they boarded a special makeup train to New Orleans.

The bullet train analysis by John Pawson, reviewed starting on page 6, can be obtained from the author by sending $2.00 to cover costs of copying and mailing, to John R. Pawson, Box 411, Willow Grove PA 19090.

"The Panic Box" will appear again in the next issue.

RAIL CANADA

A NEW REPORT which is alarming Canadian rail supporters is circulating among top government officials, even as the inner Cabinet meets to determine what cuts to make in government expenses. The report recommends "substitution of buses for the obsolete rail in Canada and the U.S." It says, "In the long term, passenger rail policy in North America must be concerned with the potential of modern, fast trains..." The author is Dr. Julius Lukasciewicz, a high-speed rail promoter. While claiming to be an "independent expert on railways" working at Ottawa's Carleton University's Engineering department, he is in fact also listed at the Ministry of Transport in the (Ottawa) Canadian Government telephone book (1981) and had two civil servant employees at last word on him.

CANADIAN PASSENGER TRAINS appear deficit-ridden because they are not allowed to play by the same accounting rules as other forms of public transportation, said Pierre Franche, VIA Rail Canada's new President, addressing the Transportation Club of Ottawa on Sep 23. Explained Franche, "Publicly, VIA is the continual butt of ciritcism because of the subsidies it requires and receives. The problem is that the accounting methodology used for measuring the profit or loss situation of passenger trains in Canada is such that it will inevitably appear that they are a losing proposition." In reality, said Franche, VIA operates three different types of train service: intercity trains operating in the Quebec City-Windsor corridor and in certain areas of the Maritimes and the Prairies; Transcontinental trains; and trains to remote areas of the country where there is no alternative means of transportation. Of the three service types, he said, only intercity services can become commercially viable. He added: "If you take a look at VIA's route map--a map of those remote services VIA is required to maintain by government--it becomes immediately apparent that they are--and will continue to be--commercially impractical. And you wouldn't find many privately-owned bus companies or airlines rushing to fill the gap were passenger trains removed." Franche maintains that VIA is willing to be measured on a commercial basis for the intercity services it provides but, he added: "We do not feel that it is in either our interests or the country's interests that VIA's competence should be judged by the lack of financial viability of either (transcontinental or remote) service types." With a contractual commitment to operate money-losing services, said Franche, VIA should be measured against those services which can become commercially viable. He explained, "Perhaps, instead of global costing methodology, we should develop costing methods by service type whereupon it could be demonstrated that... passenger trains do indeed have a future in Canada's public transportation infrastructure." He concluded: "'True' intercity service, based on a 'bottom-line' concept, is the commercial mainstay of our business. However, the principles of operating intercity services on a 'bottom-line' basis should be allowed to permeate the managerial mechanisms by which transcontinental and remote services are operated. In this manner Canadians will be assured that they are paying a minimum subsidy towards the retention of the latter service types." (From VIA press release.)

THE "PRINCESS MARGUERITE", whose regular season on the Victoria-Seattle run was just completed, featured a $5 breakfast buffet ir the Captain's Table Restaurant that was "an experience not to be missed," according to traveler David Ribbe. "All you can eat: scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, croissants, bran muffins, blueberry muffins, fresh fruit salad.

An outrageously polite Maitre d with an 'I am the walrus' mustache delivers you to your white-linened table. The deep red carpet complements the hardwood walls and window frames and the shiny brass lamps. A waiter in a spotless white uniform stands by attentively, eager to top off your water glass or coffee cup." The ship ran a special fall cruise thru the Gulf Islands on Oct 5 from Victoria (6 hours).

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

NEW BART CARS, the new C car design, will be built by a French firm. The BART Board of Directors on Oct 7 voted unanimously to award a $184 million contract to Societe Ferrovaire du Valenciencois of Paris (Soferval for short), which is a subsidiary of the Alsthom-Atlantique engineering firm, the world's largest builder of rail equipment. 150 cars are ordered, 90 of them paid for by Federal grants and 60 by BART bonds. American sub-contractors will perform 2/3 of the work on the cars, with minority firms contributing 14%. Car assembly will be done in the San Francisco Bay Area. The only American bidder was Budd, with a bid $44 million higher than Soferval, which offered the low bid. The remaining three bidders were a French firm and two Japanese firms.

A BART CAR caught fire on a Daly City-bound train at the Pleasant Hill station at 7:30am on Oct 13, causing $100,000 damage to the car. An overheated brake grid below the car burst into flames, and passengers were ordered off the train. The BART cars are now equipped with fire-retardant seats, but much of the interior of the car was damaged by fire-fighting efforts. Thousands of commuters from Contra Costa County were delayed in the morning rush hour, which was supplemented by AC Transit buses. Trains did not travel beyond the Lafayette station until 2:30pm.

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY in Houston has decided to build a rail transit system. Its Board of Directors gave unanimous approval on Sep 29 to the $1.83 billion, 18.2-mile project. The approval permits the Metro system to complete the planning for the system and to begin construction. First opening of the system is planned for July, 1987. About 70% of the 18.2-mile system is to be elevated, with the rest at grade level. Existing railroad rights of way and utility property will be largely used to provide the right of way of the new line.

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT has been trying nearly every tactic to begin service on the L.A.-Oxnard commuter line by Oct 18, but the Southern Pacific continues to resist Public Utilities Commission orders. Caltrans asked the PUC for authority to begin building stations itself on SP property, since SP has so far refused to budge to begin station construction.

MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA officials are proposing using the Northwestern Pacific Railroad line between Larkspur and Santa Rosa for a rail commuter line, linked to the Larkspur ferry.

DALLAS-AREA OFFICIALS are going on record in opposition to the proposed double-decking of the North Central Expressway, a $147 million state project.

CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY gave approval on Sep 6 to the purchase of 200 buses from the Canadian firm of Flyer Industries of Winnipeg, at a cost of $25.2 million. UMTA, which is funding 80% of the buses, granted the CTA a waiver to the requirement that vehicles bought with grant money be assembled in the U.S. and 51% of their content made in this country.

CHICAGO'S CTA OFFICIALS said on Oct 6 that a Japanese-built Mitsubishi snow blower didn't work right, and will have to be rebuilt before winter sets in.

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Amtrak Schedule Changes

This is a roundup of schedule changes taking place on the Amtrak system at the Oct 31 fall timetable change.

The INTERNATIONAL LIMITED, the new Chicago-Toronto train operated jointly with VIA Rail Canada, will begin service, and the schedule for the train is given below. Train numbers are 364, 365 and (Sundays only) 367.

A new Express Metroliner service, with two daily roundtrips, will begin between New York and Boston. Schedules will be 3 hrs, 55 mins, compared to the present average of 4 hrs, 40 mins. On Sat and Sun there will be one roundtrip each day. Intermediate stops will be Providence and New Haven, with one train daily also serving Route 128 and Stamford. Amtrak announces an entirely new on-board service for the New England Metroliners, featuring full, sit-down meals in the lounge car, and passengers will have the option of selecting from a rolling cart some complimentary breakfasts, including fresh baked pastries in the morning, and hot and cold hors d'oeuvres in the evening. The new service is aimed at business travelers. News of the service, which will probably use locomotive-hauled Amfleet cars, came out in early October.

New Amtrak bus connections will meet the SAN JOAQUINS at Hanford CA this fall (presumably starting Oct 31), from Visalia, Tulare, Lindsay and Porterville (see reproduction of flyer below). Thru ticketing will be available to and from these Tulare County cities. Likewise, bus connections will be available to and from Marysville and Chico CA for the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA at Sacramento. And for the same train, buses will run to Pasadena, Pomona and San Bern-

(continued on page 20)

Chicago/Port Huron/Toronto

READ DOWN					READ UP
364			Train Number	365	367
Inter-national			Train Name	Inter-national	Inter-national
Daily			Frequency of Operation	Ex. Su	Su only
☐			Type of Service	☐	☐
	Km	Mi			
10 25 A	0	0	Dp Chicago, IL-*Union Sta. (CT)* Ar	6 02 P	10 47 P
10 49 A	25	16	Hammond/Whiting, IN	5 22 P	10 07 P
1 08 P	141	88	Niles, MI *(ET)*	5 12 P	9 57 P
1 54 P	221	138	Kalamazoo, MI *(Grand Rapids)*	4 25 P	9 10 P
2 30 P	258	160	Battle Creek, MI	3 55 P	8 40 P
3 27 P	335	208	East Lansing, MI *(Lansing)*	240 P	725 P
3 53 P	382	238	Durand, MI •	2 12 P	6 57 P
4 18 P	409	254	Flint, MI	1 52 P	6 37 P
4 39 P	441	274	Lapeer, MI •	1 30 P	6 15 P
5 40 P	513	318	Ar Port Huron, MI ☐ Dp	12 45 P	5 30 P
5 45 P	513	318	Dp Ar	1205 P	4 50 P
			(VIA Rail Canada, Inc.)		
6 00 P	516	321	Ar Sarnia, Ont. ☐ Dp	11 50 A	4 35 P
6 30 P	516	321	Dp Ar	11 45 A	4 30 P
7 11 P	579	360	Strathroy, Ont.	11 03 A	3 44 P
7 40 P	611	380	London, Ont. *(Stratford)*	10 40 A	3 20 P
	642	399	Ingersoll, Ont.	10 08 A	
	656	408	Woodstock, Ont.	9 56 A	2 43 P
8 38 P	716	445	Brantford, Ont.	9 26 A	2 13 P
	730	454	Dundas, Ont.	▼9 60 A	
	745	463	Burlington West, Ont.	8 49 A	1 39 P
9 20 P	763	474	Oakville, Ont.	8 38 A	1 28 P
9 50 P	796	495	Ar Toronto, Ont. Dp	8 10 A	1 00 P
			Connecting Train Service		
			(VIA Rail Canada, Inc.)		
7 00 A			*Niagara Falls, Ont.*		
11 30 A			*Ottawa, Ont.*	11 35 P	11 55 P
1 30 A			Ar *Montreal, Que.* Dp	11 35 P	7 30 A

Coming soon.....

NEW AMTRAK BUS CONNECTION

to

VISALIA
TULARE
LINDSAY
PORTERVILLE

Beginning this Fall, Amtrak's San Joaquin trains will be met at Hanford by special charter buses for rail passengers only. Train passengers will be able to connect to Lower Tulare County cities for travel to and from the North. Through ticketing will be available, and the buses will be conveniently scheduled to meet all trains. Service will be provided by the California Department of Transportation in cooperation with Amtrak. See your agent for details.

★ NEGATIVE NOTES ON THE BULLET TRAIN ★

Considerable opposition to the proposed Los Angeles-San Diego bullet train appears to be growing, particularly in Southern California. On Sep 29, California Governor Brown signed a bill, rushed thru the Legislature, which authorizes the state to issue $1.25 billion in tax-free revenue bonds to go toward the rail project. The bill also exempts the bullet train project from the necessity for environmental impact studies and grants the builders the right to condemn needed property for a right-of-way. A 4-member commission early in 1983 is to decide whether the project is economically sound enough to warrant issuing the bonds.

Passage of the bill elicited much criticism in the press and from the public. For example, the L.A. Times on Oct 6 editorialized ("Fast Track to What?") that

waiving the environmental studies was setting a bad precedent. The Times had published in September an analysis of the project which pointed out many negative factors. On Oct 1 the paper published five letters from readers all with "doubts" about the project.

John R. Pawson, a NARP Director from Pennsylvania, drew up in August his own estimates of the economics of the project and a critique of the plan. He estimated that capital costs would run to $4.645 billion, instead of something over $2 billion, estimated by American High Speed Rail Corporation (AHSR).

But even more serious than the capital costs discrepancy is Pawson's estimate that the bullet train service would attract not more than 20% of the market currently traveling between the two cities. AHSR has assumed that 30% would be captured (there are presently 110,000 daily trips, so AHSR expects 33,000 per day by bullet train). If Pawson is correct, the new service would have 22,000 daily riders. AHSR has projected the roundtrip fare as $60, but Pawson assumes an average yield per trip of $15, for a total yearly revenue of $130 million (which includes $10 million for revenue from sources other than fares). This figure would leave an "annual funding gap" of $918 million, according to Pawson.

Concludes Pawson, "It is difficult to escape three general conclusions: (a) The AHSR proposal cannot be depicted as a truly private venture in the traditional sense, due to its high costs and losses; (b) Very large subsidies must be given, in the form of free equipment, free rights of way, and direct or indirect capital and operating subsidy from Japanese, U.S., and California governments and industries; (c) Any contributions from U.S. and California governments might well be at the expense of current Amtrak service funding."

American High Speed Rail Corporation

The biggest concern of critics is that the project will not survive on private enterprise principles alone and will require government subsidies that could be of such magnitude that they would adversely affect other ongoing rail passenger service. Said L.A. Times Staff Writer Doris Byron Fuller, "Interviews with more than a score of leading investment bankers, bond analysts, transportation authorities, rail officials and others nationwide revealed a broad consensus that the public will end up footing part of the bill if the project is built as proposed. With few exceptions, these experts maintain that faulty assumptions about costs, ridership and profits underpin the plans of the private firm proposing the train. But by the time these faults are exposed, they say, government will find it financially and politically impossible to allow the project to die."

In support of Pawson's analysis, Mr. E. L. Tennyson, a professional engineer of Middletown PA, told RTN: "I worked in San Diego with the Metropolitan Transit Development Board there in 1979-80, and had occasion to use the less-than-adequate Amtrak service. I also made an electrification and line improvement study for the L.A.-San Diego corridor and found profitable operations possible with no radical technology, just better service and fewer cars, with better utilization, but no crowding. Mr. Pawson may have overstated car maintenance costs, and understated on-train employee cost, but his basic point is as sound as the rock of Gibraltar. No one can build a sound foundation on sand. No taxpayer or traveler can support AHSR intelligently. This is not Japan, or even France. We can have much improved service with better economic results, but we won't get it with pipe dreams. No one can afford the losses. Government help is essential, but only within savings to the economy."

If taxpayers must start footing the bill for the bullet train, then, according to Pawson, the venture becomes a public one, to be based on cost-benefit analyses rather than on standard business analysis, and the public will have a right to answers to these questions:

"What is the purpose of the project if not profit?"

"How many jobs will be created and what businesses will profit?"

"How many jobs will be lost due to the redistribution of wealth by government taxation for the project?"

"Should this project be more of a suburban transportation scheme instead of having just a small number of stops intended mainly for intercity travel?"

"In view of U.S. DOT's rejection of a 110-mph top speed for the 64-mile Philadelphia-Atlantic City corridor, is a 160-mph top speed justifiable here?"

"Given answers to the above questions, what public contributions are desirable and how should the costs be distributed?"

Pawson believes that all of these questions should be answered at the outset, to avoid a possible "Penn Central-type bailout crisis, either in the construction or operation stage."

Dawson brings up another issue: with a high cost per mile for bullet train line construction, why not have a few thousand miles at a lower cost, or even 10,000 miles in a lower yet range? In other words, why spend so much money on just one isolated area of the country? Why not spread out the money over the whole country, improving our entire rail passenger system?

Says Dawson, "Certainly, the true costs of this plan should be known before any commitments are made. All too often in big construction projects, costs are initially greatly understated to 'get a foot in the door', to get civic leaders so ego-involved that they will not step back and re-examine priorities and alternatives when the true costs become known."

One of the criticisms rail supporters have been raising about the project is the relative lack of commuter feeder lines bringing travelers into and away from the bullet line route. How would 17,500 (half of AHSR's projected passengers daily) get to L.A. Union Station? Where would they park if they drove there? The L.A. Times stated that transportation experts it had consulted said that "--even with higher speeds and greater comfort--the system cannot overcome Southern California's lack of dense population and business centers and adequate 'feeder' transit systems or the attraction of alternative means of travel, particularly the automobile." Says Pawson on this topic: "Southern California lacks (and for some time, will lack) anything like the concentration of business and population near the downtown stations, the quality of transit feeder service to bring that concentration to the stations, and other attributes for very high volume rail travel that exist in Britain and to a lesser degree in the NE Corridor."

Is Pawson right about his figures, which differ radically from those calculated by ASHR? It's impossible to tell at this point how accurate are any of the figures generated by the several studies. The L.A. Times reported that Jonathan Richmond, a former Fulbright scholar at the Center for Transportation Studies at MIT told them that "The truth" lies somewhere in between the high figures calculated by Pawson and the lower estimates of AHSR. AHSR had a study done by Arthur D. Little, completed early this summer. However, AHSR is not revealing the results of the study, terming them "proprietary." Thus the public does not have the benefits of the feasibility study generated by this respected consultant firm.

Will the bullet train project lead to an economic disaster for passenger trains? There are always some rail supporters who fear any new project and would like to return to the last century if they could. It is necessary to separate the complaints of such people from the legitimate questions raised by critics who want to keep the development of U.S. passenger rail on a steady course and avoid a fiasco that could be disastrous to the American rail travel renaissance. The public and the decision makers need to have all the answers to the relevant questions before casting the die on a risky venture.

VIA TODAY: ACROSS CANADA BY TRAIN
How It Compares With Amtrak
by W. G. Frick

I recently had the pleasure, and in Canada it still is a pleasure, of crossing the continent by train. Rather then offer another travelog on my 6000 mile trip from Vancouver to Churchill and on to Halifax and detailing when I was on time, where I was derailed and what I ate; I would like to compare Via and rail transportation in Canada to what Amtrak offers today. During the trip I kept my eyes open, took notes and observed the equipment, the passenger service personnel and their attitudes, the stations, the operating railroads and their employees. This article is my subjective evaluation of the state of Via today.

The majority of the long distance passenger railway equipment in Canada today dates from a series of orders made in the 1950's by CN and CP to Pullman Standard and Budd. These cars have been given, until recently, absolutely first rate maintenance. They are in better shape than the equipment Amtrak inherited when it was formed and after Amtrak's the first rebuilding program. Via equipment is in better shape than some Herit age fleet equipment.

However, Via's equipment is old. Despite good maintenance the age of the equipment is showing. Running gear seemed less than optimally cared for. Small things in the cars (door latches, ice water taps) are giving out and some air conditioning failiures are occuring. Via now appears to be cutting some edges in it s maintenance program. Of the 8 dome cars I rode at various times not one had a single clear front window; that's 0 for 16.

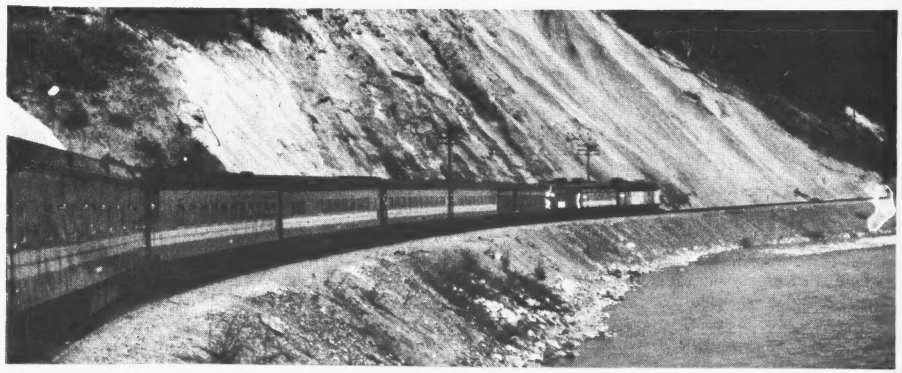
New equipment is supposed to be purchased in the near future using a part of the "savings" from recent Via service cutbacks. However, I very recently read that the Canadian Government appears to be reneging on their committment. I can't begin to guess what the outcomne will be, but as it will be a political decesion and Via, unlike Amtrak, has few political freinds, I fear for the worst. I certainly hope that their new equipment won't take as long to get on the road as the Superliners did and that the finished product will be as successful, with bathrooms in all sleeper accomdations please !

All Via equipment I rode on started out a trip cleaner than Amtrak equipment and stayed that way. By comparison the Superliners are rapidly becoming dirty through lack of adequate cleaning. After a few hours or a day out the difference was even more striking. Via crews keep their train clean. They clean up and vacuum each day, while Amtrak appears to provide no cleaning at all between endpoints. Amtrak's lounge cars in particular are filthy after a few hours out. Amtrak personnel apparantly do not reguard anyhing beyond setting out a few trash bags as being among their duties.

The on board services of Via are generally superior to those of Amtrak. Pullman porters on Via show an interest in their passengers in boarding, in making up the accomodations at night, in preparing the rooms for day use and in helping the passenger disembark. It does not seem to be an interest generated solely by tips; they genuinely seem interested in assisting their passengers. My recent experience suggests to me that Amtrak Pullman porters belive their responsibility is to serve as additional ballast to avoid derailments.

The services of the lounge car attendents on Via are not up to the standards set by the Pullman porters. This I must attribute to cutbacks in the style of service provided. The bar menu of Via has been cutback to a basic service of liquor (one or two common brands of gin, scotch, vodka, a few liquors) and beer or wine. The supply of these items seems subject to the same problem all to often seen on Amtrak - Don't Got. The "glassware" is plastic and the coffee instant, despite installed coffee brewers. This has affected the attitude of the attendents. They adopt the same habits common on Amtrak - late openings; they start to set things up when passengers start to board, early closings, an hour or more before arrival at an end point, and a general indifference to service.

There can be no comparison between the food serv ed on Via and the (exeplitive deleted) served on Amtrak. Dinner in the Diner is still a joy on Via. Although not of gourmet standards nor luxuriously served the food on Via is good, well prepared and properly serve d. It is prepared on the train and the interest of the staff is reflected in the care in the preparation of the food, the presentation on the plate and in the attentiveness of the dining room staff. The stewards and the staff are courteous and interested in their job and proud of the food they serve. The memus have been cutback, somewhat. There are a limited number of items for dinner, usually 4, and the same menu, less one entre, is served at lunch. This has not affected the quality of ingredients or the attention paid to the preparation.



VIA's train 2, the CANADIAN, near Palliser B.C. on May 11, 1982. Gene Hines photo.

The atmosphere on most Amtrak Diners these days reminds me of a 1930's prison movie. A crowd of sullen people consuming something for the purpose of sustaining life. Amtrak's food service personnel are automatically defensive and appear interested mostly in moving people in and out before they can complain.

I also had a chance to sample Via's latest attempt at cost cutting as exemplified in reduced menu service on the Atlantic. Since the food, as far as I could see, is still prepared in the same manner,there was no detectable change in the quality. However, the staff is getting tired of giving a bureaucrat's answer to the very logical question, "Why can't I have a sandwich at lunch in the Diner?". Their answer is "Sandwichs are served only in the snack car and hot meals only in the diner." I am afraid that in time and particularly if the reduced service is extended, the quality of dining car service will suffer.

Via's stations are not much different than those of Amtrak. Most are old and the more rural ones show the effects of a lack of maintenance over a period of some years. In the large cities the stations are well maintained and with the generally safer streets in Canada they are more available for use by all persons. all are generally clean and open reasonable hours. The in-station services outside of the cities are, like Amtrak's, very limited. Via appears to provide considereably more checked baggage service than does Amtrak; However I can not testify to it s speediness or effectiveness as I always carried my own bag.

I would have to describe the attitude of railroad personnel operating Via Trains as neutral. They are buisnesslike and efficient and I encountered none who were dis-courteous or hostile. There was no arbitrary closing of Dutch doors or the open hostility of some (i.e. Southern Pacific) railroad personnnel seen on Amtrak, but neither was there much interest. The operating employees were not enthuastic about their work and, although some seemed to enjoy working on passenger trains, I got the distinct impression most would prefer to be on the freight board.

The railroads themselves seem ambivilent about Via. They are almost as ready to put a Via train in the hole for a paying freight as are most American railroads, but this may be a reflection of their knowledge that with Via's aganozingingly slow schedules the lost time can be made up later. In the West the slow schedules with long waits permit CP or CN to let #1 or #2 get 1 - 2 hours late and then, presto chango, be on time when leaving Winnipeg, as an example. However, I did not see the kind of intentional delay of passenger trains I have seen on the SP. Most arrivals on shorter trips were within what Amtrak calls "on time". For longer distances the end point arrivals were close to the advertised. Unfortunatley in some instances reguarding a passenger train as a second class movement can cause difficulties. I was onboard #93 coming down from Churchill when we were sent into the hole for a very long grain train. Unfortunatley the siding was 55 pound rail laid on very well spaced ties without the benefit of fishplates and it had been some time since it had seen a track gang. The result of running several 138,000 pound Pullmans down such rail was preditiable. Three cars on the ground and a 12 hour delay.

Via did their part in providing a gratis breakfast, as the train was delayed well past normal arrival time in the morning, and providing as best as they could for passengers from the derailed cars. However, prudent operating policies would have delayed the grain train until #93 could have reached a siding better equipted to handle it.

In conclusion I can advise anyone who wants an enjoyable, pleasant train trip with good food on clean equipment to head for Canada. A railfan will throughtly enjoy himself spotting and riding in a variety of passenger equipment pulled largely by 1st generation diesels. Anyone will enjoy the beatiful Canadian scenery and the uniformly freindly Canadian people. However, I would suggest that you go now rather than wait. The service cuts I have seen, the minimal bar service and the reduced menus on the Atlantic, are sure to spread and if Amtrak is an indicator, employee attitudes seem likely to decline with the cuts. Perhaps in future years a successor to the Superliners will be riding the rails in the Canadian West, but I hope that the on board services have not been allowed to deteriorate to the disgraceful state of Amtrak's before the new equipment arrives.

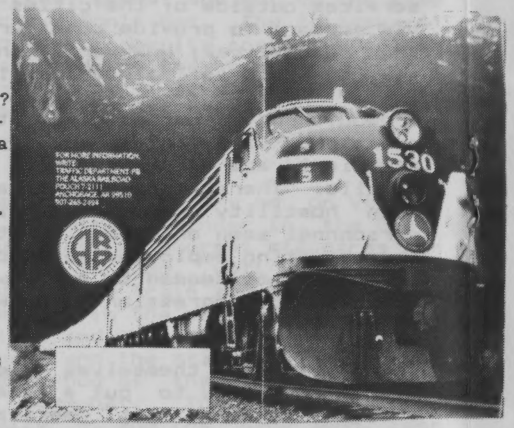
The Incredible Alaska Railroad

by David Ribbe

Bring up the name Drew Lewis and what immediate associations come to mind? F-7s in Bicentennial colors? Dome cars in deep river canyons? Real dinner in the diner? Mixed trains? Passenger specials?

Mr. Lewis, U.S. Secretary of Transportation, is the numero uno boss of the Alaska Railroad, which operates all of the above with gusto thru an area of glacier-covered mountains and moose-bedotted spruce bogs. I don't know if he can personally be held responsible for this marvelous state of affairs in our "Last Frontier," but so what? There are more closet train lovers in this country than most people think.

We returned to the "Lower Forty-Eight" recently after four days of close encounters with the Alaska Railroad, positively brimming with enthusiasm for this wonderful railroad.



This past summer the Alaska Railroad ran two regular passenger train services between Fairbanks and Anchorage: The ANCHORAGE and DENALI EXPRESSES (Nos. 1 & 2), running daily and stopping only at Denali Park; and Nos. 3 and 4, mixed locals running three days a week in each direction and stopping, according to one brakeman, anywhere a white flag is waved at them.

The ANCHORAGE EXPRESS that we rode on September 1 had F7A engine 1510 in Bicentennial livery on the point, followed by an F7B in the more common yellow and blue. It was a steam-heated train with a baggage car, four flattop coaches, one dome coach, and two diners, one of which was leased from Amtrak and served as a cafe-lounge. The cars were in varying degrees of frayed, comfortable shabbiness.

Passenger trains on the ARR run at a top speed of 50mph on authority of the timetable and train orders; there are no block signals. The roadbed is in good condition. Nos. 1 and 2 make the 356-mile run in 9 1/2 hours.

In early September, wildflowers are in profusion along the railroad south of Fairbanks. One of the scenic high spots is the crossing of the wide, brown, sluggish Tanana River at Nenana over a 700-foot long steel structure, one of the longest single span bridges in the world, and going around a sweeping complete S curve coming off the bridge that takes the train down into town along the river before heading south again. The mountains begin to close in as the train runs up the Nenana River valley, and just past Healy, as the railroad nears the boundary of Denali Park, the train enters a rugged, twisting and scenic canyon with the river, going thru several tunnels and over numerous bridges. Rafts full of people in orange life vests floated down the river the other way.

Our one-day stopover in Denali Park was noteworthy on several counts; but first a word about the name of the park. Until last year it was Mt. McKinley National Park, named after the mountain which, with a summit of 20,300 feet above sea level, is the highest mountain in North America, and if measured from its base to the top is the highest mountain in the world. It was named after President William McKinley (1897-1901) by a prospector, one James Dickey, who published an account of the mountain on Jan. 24, 1897 in the New York Sun. He was enthusiastic about McKinley because McKinley favored a gold monetary standard, a good thing for gold miners. The President never had anything to do with the mountain, and so the choice of name was entirely a political matter. The Tenana and Yukon Indians called it Denali, translated variously as "The High One," "The Sacred One," "The Great One." By popular demand, the name of the park was changed, tho it appears that the mountain itself has not yet been officially renamed.

We stayed for a night at the Denali Park Station Hotel, located a few hundred yards behind the combined railroad station-post office. There are two basic choices of accommodation at this hotel. Over a dozen ARR sleeping cars are parked in end-to-end pairs, protruding from the main building. Some are old heavyweight cars and others are newer. Bedrooms rent for $27 per night for two with bathrooms and showers down the hall. The regular hotel rooms start at $72. To our delight, we were booked into an ancient sleeper and enjoyed every old-fashioned, cramped minute of it.

For those interested in budget accommodations at Denali Park, there is a youth hostel across the tracks from the station, made up of three bunkcars (ex-boxcars): $1.00 per night; bring your own sleeping bag.

The next morning we were off at 6am for a Tundra-Wildlife bus tour of the Park, timed specifically to deliver us back to the station in time to catch the ANCHORAGE EXPRESS at 1:25pm.

From a previous visit, I knew that due to almost continuous clouds hanging about the Alaska Range, it was very unlikely that we would see Denali. People staying in the Park for three weeks sometimes never see it, so when we woke up to an overcast morning, we didn't expect much. But we were in for a surprise! About 10 miles up the road from the hotel, we were treated to an absolutely clear view of the awesome Denali, covered with pink snow, catching the day's first rays of sunlight. Our guide, who, presumably, had been doing this all summer, was noticeably moved many times in the next few hours by the magnificent and rare views we had before the clouds closed in about the mountain.

We also saw nine Toklat grizzly bears, one from within a couple of hundred feet of the road, looking quite fierce; some caribou and Dall sheep to go with one spectacular vista after another of the colorful tundra.

We drove up to the station just as No. 2 was arriving with its HEP consist in a new paint job pulled by back-to-back F7As ahead of a covered wagon B unit modified into a hotel-power generator.

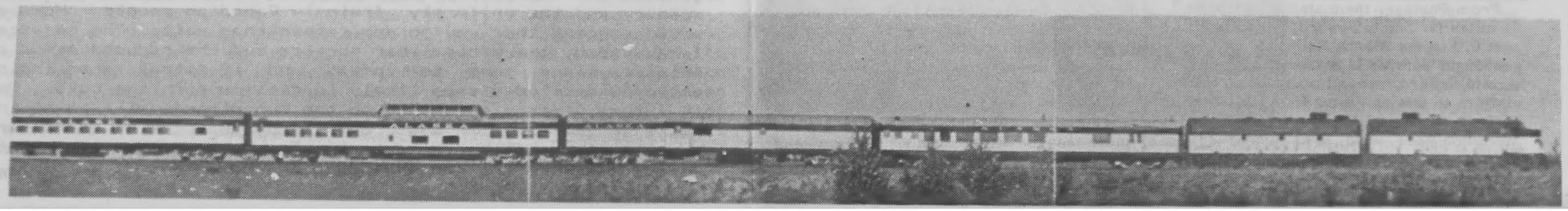
The mountains of the east end of the park which the railroad winds its way thru are colorful and beautiful. Further south as the line follows the Susitna River, there are several places where Denali can be seen towering over the Alaska Range with its three smaller but still impressive companion mountains, weather permitting, of course, which it wasn't that afternoon. In this area is a wide spot in the road called Willow, which may be the future state capital.

The newly refurbished equipment on this train was very, very nicely done--a real pleasure to ride in. The colors were cheerful oranges and browns, and it all looked brand new. The Union Pacific pictures that are part of the panelling of some of the cars are still there, some picturing pretty yellow trains.

The cafe-lounge had a lunch counter and a few diner-like tables and a display case featuring souvenir hats, T-shirts, playing cards, etc., all with the ARR logo.

The diner served lunch all afternoon, not because of heavy demand, but just because that's what they do. At 3:30 in the afternoon we were served a lunch which included a big thick slice of roast beef, baked potato, vegetable, salad and beverage for about $7.50. The dinner menu listed, among other things, a prime rib entree for $14, but I couldn't even imagine wanting a bigger or better dinner than the lunch we'd had. The waitress was friendly, efficient, and really cared whether we had enough and liked it. We did! If that meal was typical of ARR dining car service, they have everyone else beaten by a long shot.

The ARR offers one other delightful and highly unusual, regular passenger service: The WHITTIER SHUTTLE. This train's



schedule varies depending on the day of the week. The following describes the Friday service we observed and rode: The train left Anchorage at 11am with a freight engine pulling a heavyweight combine, two coaches, a baggage-steam generator car, and a Bicentennial caboose. The combine had flip-over seats and the ex-baggage section had been converted to a little snack bar serving booze, hot dogs, sandwiches, etc. There was one little table seating two by the sliding door, and an electrical generator at the end to supply power for the appliances. The car was well-worn, but comfortable and fun to be in. A handprinted sign on the door read "Bar car - Welcome."

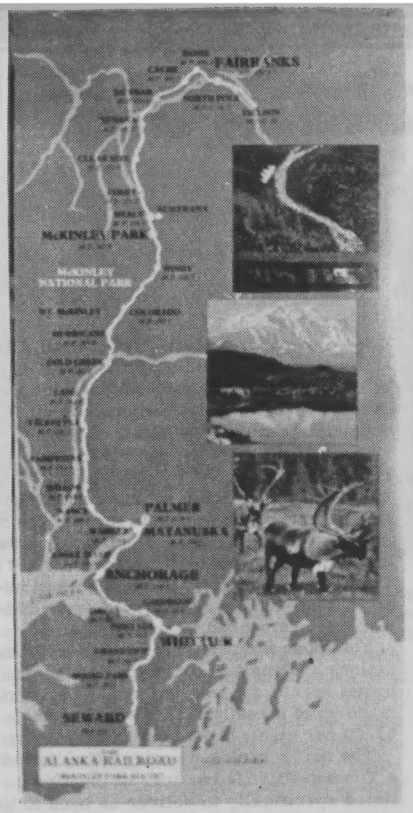
Upon leaving Anchorage, this train goes for 50 miles along the edge of Turnagain Arm of Cook Inlet, a lovely fjord which has 35-foot tides, second highest in the world, and a 5-foot bore tide that can be seen moving up the arm if you're there at the right time.

A 12.4-mile-long branch line heads off to the east from Portage to the town of Whittier, where freight trains arrive by boat from afar and where the Alaska Marine Highway Ferry leaves for the 7-hour trip across Prince William Sound to Valdez. Since there is no road to Whittier, the train is needed to take people and their vehicles there. At Portage the train cut off its caboose on the mainline and backed onto a string of specially-designed flatcars. The agent, a young lady who travelled with the train, went about collecting fares from the cars, buses and trucks that were waiting to board, and the brakemen directed them up a ramp and onto the flatcars where they drove from one car to the next until reaching the baggage car or the vehicle ahead. Motorists stayed in their vehicles for the 35-minute leisurely ride to Whittier.

The U.S. Army extended the railroad to Whittier during World War II, tunnelling about five miles under two glacier-covered mountains. Between the two tunnels, the track briefly skirts a spectacularly beautiful lake at the foot of Portage Glacier, which has hundreds of blue and white icebergs flating about in it, that have broken off the glacier.

The train shuttled three times between Portage and Whittier with its loads of vehicles and then returned to Anchorage at 10pm with only the cars it brought down in the morning.

From Portage, the mainline continues 64 miles farther to Seward, which is Milepost 0.0 on the Alaska Railroad. Altho passenger service is not regularly scheduled to Seward, special trains often carry visitors to this charming town for activities such as the Annual Fourth of July Mount Marathon Race, which draws runners from all over the country; and the Seward Silver



Map of the railroad's route from passenger brochure.

Salmon Derby, held each summer, an irresistible challenge to sport fishermen.

On Saturday, Sep 4 we spent the day driving about in the area north of Anchorage, exploring the mountains and getting some lucky views of Denali along the Susitna River. At about 6:00 in the evening, we drove over to Palmer, where the state fair was on, to try to meet up with a friend there. A 6 1/2-mile long, 10mph branch of the ARR runs from Matanuska to Palmer, normally only used by freight trains. We passed the rock train on the way to Palmer, but saw another headlight further up the tracks. What the devil could that be? We arrived at the fairgrounds in time to watch a State Fair passenger special pulled by a GP 40 leave for the 43-mile run to Anchorage, with a steam generator, five flattop coaches, four dome coaches and a baggage car in the middle--probably the bandstand-concession car.

I could be wrong, but I get the feeling that the Alaska Railroad likes to run passenger trains. By all means, go ride them. You'll love it.

Alaska Railroad Train No. 1, the ANCHORAGE EXPRESS, at Denali National Park on September 1. Photo by David Ribbe.

Consist of DENALI EXPRESS Aug 31 at Fairbanks: engines 1510 (F7A Bicentennial unit), 1517 (F7B); 6332 baggage, 5403 coach, 5437 coach, 4815 diner, 4836 diner (used as cafe-lounge; Amtrak #8036), 7014 dome coach, 5416 coach, 5441 coach.

(NEWS ITEM: The Dept. of Transportation, which owns the Alaska Railroad, is trying to sell it to the State of Alaska. The Rail Safety and Service Improvement Act recently passed by Congress permits the DOT to make the sale.)

★ THE DOME CAR RETURNS; FURTHER NEWS

We reported previously that Amtrak is about to rebuild seven dome cars, converting them to head-end power, for use on the CAPITOL LIMITED and the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS. Cars 9478, 9479, 9480, 9481, 9482, 9483 and 9485 will be converted. The cars are all 1954-built Budd dome coaches obtained from the Northern Pacific. They were former NP numbers 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556 and 558. The CITY OF NEW ORLEANS will use three cars and one backup spare, and the CAPITOL LIMITED will use two cars plus one spare. The first rebuilt car is scheduled to emerge from Amtrak's Beech Grove Shops in the spring.

The cars were moved East recently from Western storage locations as follows: Domes 9478, 9479, 9482 and 9485, stored at Oakland, were moved from there to Los Angeles on Sep 17 on the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA; consist of that train was: engines 301, 240; cars 1127, 2988 "Pine Dale", 2995 "Pine Brook", 20233, 21872, 21873, 21860, 21815, (deadheads:) 9479, 9478, 9482, 9485. They apparently remained in L.A. until they were sent eastward on the SOUTHWEST LTD

(Left:) Dome 9479 in one of its last assignments as a steam-heated car: on the RENO FUN TRAIN, at Oakland on Feb 6, 1981. Also in the consist were domes 9478, 9485 & 9457. RTN photo.

on Sep 24. Consist of that train appears in "Cars & Consists" on page 22. Cars 9480 and 9483 were deadheaded from L.A. on train 4 on an earlier occasion (Sep 17?). Car 9481 was at Beech Grove even before that, and was used in some test runs. The car ran on the CAPITOL LTD from Washington to Pittsburgh on Sep 15 and then on the combined BROADWAY/CAPITOL on to Chicago, to test for clearances. On Sep 16 it ran on train 318, the HOOSIER STATE, from Chicago to Indianapolis. Consist of the CAPITOL LTD of Sep 15 was: engine 275; cars 1360, 1228, 2990, 4709, 4714, 28008, deadhead dome 9481. Train 41 looked like this: engines 318, 313, 354; cars 1212, 1360, 1228, 2990, 4709, 4714, 8506, 3124, 25062, 25068, 25061, 2881, 2448, 25070, deadhead dome 9481. Train 318 was: engine 318; cars 21241, 20001, buffer car 10401, deadhead dome 9481. But even earlier, the car made its first test run on Sep 6, from Chicago to Pittsburgh on the BROADWAY/CAPITOL and then on to Washington on the CAPITOL LTD. Car 9481 had been in storage in Indiana since late summer of 1978. The actual clearance test was made in Washington on Sep 8.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

CRIME AND VIOLENCE on the Florida trains, Part One: Amtrak train 82/92, the SILVER STAR, left Florida as usual on Oct 7 and was running on time as it neared Raleigh NC the next morning. A shot rang out in sleeping car 2475, beginning the strangest saga ever enacted on an Amtrak train. A woman passenger had been shot to death, it was learned later, and her two children, ages 9 months and 4 years, and her brother, identified as Evangelista Navas Villabona, 30, a Colombian citizen, remained locked in the sleeping compartment with her body. At Raleigh there began a siege, with armed law enforcement officers surrounding the sleeping car while Villabona refused to come out or speak with anyone. The train was delayed 3 hours, 40 minutes, finally leaving Raleigh after three cars were uncoupled and left behind at the station, surrounded by FBI agents, half of the Raleigh police force and many more local and state officers and firemen. Villabona, an ex-convict and a man of many aliases, who had been deported from the U.S. on an earlier occasion, was armed with a small pistol and a machine gun. Numerous shots were fired at the police during the siege, and later the sleeping car room was found full of gunshot holes. The siege did not end until about 5:45am the morning of Oct 11, and not until a man whom Villabona referred to as his "godfather" was located and flown from New York to speak to Villabona thru a bullhorn and assure him that the officers were not there to harm him. The ex-con showed himself at a window that had been broken by police the afternoon of Oct 10 and made a trade of his pistol for some food. Early on the 11th he allowed the 4-year old girl to leave, and a few hours later gave up himself. The infant had died of dehydration during the long siege. Authorities wondered why the infant had not been given water, since it was available in the car, and it was speculated that Villabona may have believed the water had been poisoned. Villabona was taken to a maximum security prison. During the siege, train service continued at the Raleigh station with boarding taking place at a distance of several hundred yards from the siege scene. The three cars left at Raleigh were baggage-dorm 1450, sleeper 2475 and slumbercoach 2089. Full consist of the train was: engines 370 (from St. Pete), 379 (from Miami), 964 (Washington-NY); cars 25015, 1164, 1450, 2475, 2089, 25001, 25009, 8516 (all from Miami), 3127, 25057, 25056, 2436 (all from St. Pete). The train was thus a mixture of Heritage Fleet and Amfleet II cars. Final arrival at New York was at 9:48pm on Oct 8, 4 hours, 1 minute late. Amtrak reminded employees, "It should be emphasized that such incidents on Amtrak trains are extremely rare. In our company's history, there have been only four or five episodes in which guns were wielded, and not all of them resulted in the fun being fired. Passengers should be assured of our trains' safety, and normal security measures will continue to be taken." Sleeping car 2475, a Heritage Fleet car, was formerly numbered 2701, and before Amtrak it was Seaboard Coast Line car 6616 "Miami." To the best of our knowledge, it still bears the name "Miami".....

FLORIDA TRAINS CRIME, Part Two: We reported last issue that the FBI's most wanted man, Joseph M. McDonald, was arrested as he left the SILVER METEOR at New York on Sep 15. We now have more details: McDonald was wanted for the alleged 1971 robbery of philatelic dealer Jack Molesworth of Boston, in which $1 million in stamps were taken. The FBI recovered 3/4 of the stolen stamps earlier, helped by a West Coast stamp dealer. The dealer was shot to death after he had planned to testify against McDonald and an alleged accomplice, James Sims. Sims was taken into custody a few months ago. McDonald had boarded the SILVER METEOR in Hollywood FL on Sep 14, and a police officer there noticed that he acted suspiciously with his luggage. McDonald refused to open the luggage for the officer, but the officer had no warrant to detain him. A call was made to New York, however, to watch for him, and city police arrested him as he detrained there, finding three guns and ammunition in his suitcase. It remained a mystery as to why McDonald continued on to New York, into a trap, after having been approached by police upon boarding in Florida.....

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THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC on Oct 1 reached an agreement with GTE Corporation to sell the railroad company's long-distance communications subsidiaries, Sprint and Spacenet, for $750 million in cash. The arrangement was applauded by those who were concerned with the railroad's diminishing finances in the recession. The move also represents a laudable decision to concentrate on the railroad. While the communications units were successful, they were draining cash from the railroad while they were in the process of being built up. The SP's management had been the subject of a critical review in Forbes magazine in August (see RTN 249). The sale still must be approved by regulatory agencies.....

WORST RAILROAD DISASTER ever in Louisiana occurred on Sep 28 in the hours before dawn when an ICG train of toxic chemicals derailed at Livingston LA. 43 cars left the track, and there were explosions, leakage of toxic chemicals, and a fire that took almost two weeks to extinguish. About 2700 people were evacuated from their homes for a 2-week period. Livingston is 17.5 miles west of Hammond LA, the nearest Amtrak point, and Amtrak trains (the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS being the closest) were not directly affected.....

★ ★ ★

DOME CAR REBUILDING: An addendum to the article on page 15: dome cars 9480 and 9483 traveled east on the rear of train 4, leaving L.A. on Sep 27. Consist of that train was: engines 291, 241; cars 1129, 1245, 39931, 31045, 39947, 34024, 39971, 38005, 32036, 32068, and deadheads 9480 and 9483. The buffer on car 9480 had been hastily torched off to make the car Superliner-compatible. Car 9483 has had its trailing dome windows missing for about the last 1½ years. One other ex-NP dome coach remains stored in L.A.--no. 9486, not part of this initial set of dome rebuilds. Cars 9478, 9479 and 9485, besides being used on the RENO FUN TRAIN in 1980-81, were used on the Oakland-Portland segment of the 4449 steam excursion of May 16, 1981, probably their last revenue use as steam-heated cars.....

AIRLINE STEWARDESSES INCREASINGLY refuse to eat airline food, reports American Health magazine (Jul-Aug issue), so they bring their own food on the plane. The magazine says the stewardesses criticize the food for being non-nutritious, as well as being "full of MSG and other preservatives". They say that Seafood Newburg is really cod pressed thru a tube, and with red dye added. Salads are "sprayed with something to keep it from turning brown." Stewardesses are recommending that passengers demand food this is "more nutritious, less doctored". No mention is made of Amtrak's airline-style food, but many rail travelers also hope for the day when food on board is fresher and more nutritious.....

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: Just to get the background information straight concerning the two slumbercoaches Amtrak is purchasing from Ross Rowland's High Iron Company for HEP conversion, as given in RTN #251, page 19: the two ex-B&O cars were numbered 7700 ("Slumberland") and 7701 ("Dreamland"). We reported that Amtrak will number them as 2057 and 2058, but another correspondent says they will become 2096 and 2097.....

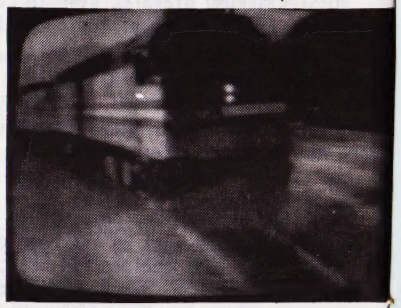
NEW HEROES DEPARTMENT: Empire Way, an 8-mile arterial in Seattle, has been renamed to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The original street name was for James J. Hill, the "Empire Builder" of the Great Northern Railway.....

THINGS WE NEGLECTED TO PUBLISH PREVIOUSLY DEPARTMENT: The Washington Times on June 17 published an "exposé" article by David S. Roberts that complained that former Amtrak President Alan Boyd had spent over $40,000 redecorating his office at Amtrak headquarters in 1981, even while Amtrak was cutting budgets and laying off almost 400 workers.....

THE MILWAUKEE ROAD on Aug 23 completed the purchase of 98 miles of Rock Island track in Eastern Iowa, at a cost of $17 million.....

★ ★ ★

THE ADIRONDACK RAILWAY still has a glimmer of hope for a future. In September the Economic Development and Technical Assistance Center at Pittsburgh, New York's State University conducted a survey to determine whether there is "a sufficient demand for passenger and freight transportation to warrant resuming service on the Adirondack Railroad." The University's survey form went on to say that "Schedules (presumably of a proposed service) will provide convenient morning and evening service year round. Services will include a dome and open air car, sleeper car, lounge and dining car in addition to the standard passenger-freight accommodations." The survey, evidently directed toward businessmen in the travel and transportation industries, asked whether they would use the service, how many passengers would they service thru their business to the rail line annually, at which season of year they would most likely travel, and which car services would be used (open air car, dome car, etc.).....



THE REAL PEOPLE TV show of Sep 29 featured the second part of the "Real People Express" filmed on Amtrak trains between Los Angeles and Chicago via Texas. The second, 60-minute segment was as nice as the first, with plenty of free publicity for Amtrak trains. The photo at the right is a shot from the program. Many of the Amtrak crew--porters, dining crew, lounge attendant, etc.--were given small speaking parts on the program, such as making short announcements.....

★ ★ ★

THREE NEW MOVIES which use footage shot on or of Amtrak trains are to be released in December, Amtrak said. They are "Verdict", "Tootsie", and "Best Friend." Besides being on two episodes of the TV series "Real People", Amtrak was featured recently in the John Belushi hit "Continental Divide", which included EMPIRE BUILDER shots.....

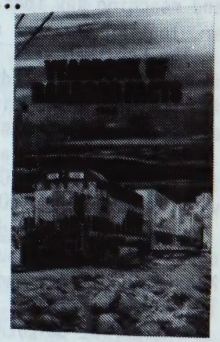
SELMA, NORTH CAROLINA becomes an Amtrak station stop beginning Oct 31. The city had a Railroad Days celebration the first weekend of October, and Amtrak put on an equipment display to coincide with the event. 15,000 people attended the event, and Amtrak said "scores" of people looked at the Amtrak equipment.....

AMTRAK FAMILY DAYS in Albany-Rensselaer the weekend of Oct 9 drew about 37,500 people,Amtrak said. The same weekend saw a 7-car display in Orlando FL, which attracted 8,000 viewers. But an even bigger event, according to Amtrak, is a display of the same 7 cars (and one locomotive) in Miami Oct 11-12, inconjunction with

an ASTA Congress. Amtrak considers the participation in the ASTA (American Society of Travel Agents) Congress its "major marketing event of the year, and possibly the decade." Amtrak will present seminars on selling rail travel in North America on Oct 12 and 13 for delegates to the travel congress.....

"YOU'LL LOVE NEW YORK" says Amtrak with the graphics shown here, designed for a special Amtrak promotion on travel to New York City. The catchwords are "get a bigger bite of the Big Apple" and "Big Apple Travel Kit". The Kit goes to purchasers of tickets to New York from most Amtrak cities, and it provides a coupon book with discounts to as many as 12 Broadway shows, 20-50% off food bills at some well-known restaurants, and 2-for-1 admissions to such cultural attractions as the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of American Folk Art or guided tours of the Rockefeller or Lincoln Centers. Amtrak said it is combining its lowest excursion fares to NYC with discounts at nine Manhattan hotels; for example, an overnight visitor from Boston would pay $85 for the rail trip plus a weekend night at the St. Regis Sheraton Hotel. Children under 12 can stay free in the same hotel room with their parents. The special NY promotion runs Oct 1 thru Dec 15. A special brochure is available from ticket or travel agents.....

★ ★ ★



"YEARBOOK OF RAILROAD FACTS" 1982 shown here is a neat little handbook of railroad industry statistics, published last month by the Association of American Railroads, Economics and Finance Dept (1920 L Street NW, Washington DC 20036).....

LESS THAN AIR: Amtrak said this month that a study of rail vs. air fares in Amtrak's top 20 city-pair markets found that Amtrak regular coach fares averaged 54% of the airlines' regular coach charges.....

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers held its annual Board of Directors' meeting in New Orleans the weekend of Oct 9.....

★ ★ ★

MIAMI-TAMPA SERVICE will begin Nov 21 as a new 403-B train. The train will be named the SILVER PALM, trains 895 & 896 in Amtrak's timetable. A train will leave Tampa daily at 4:30pm, Lakeland 5:05, Winter Haven 5:42, Sebring 6:22, West Palm Beach 7:52, Delray Beach 8:18, Deerfield Beach 8:32, Ft. Lauderdale 8:47, Hollywood 9:02, reaching Miami at 9:40pm. Train 896 leaves Miami at 8am, Hollywood 8:24, Ft. Lauderdale 8:37, Deerfield Beach 8:53, Delray Beach 9:07, West Palm Beach 9:33, Sebring 11:04, Winter Haven 11:45, Lakeland 12:20, reaching Tampa at 1:15pm. Connecting buses will be provided to Miami Beach from Miami, to Orlando from Winter-Haven, and to St. Petersburg and Clearwater from Tampa. With the new service, which took two years to negotiate, Florida becomes the eighth state to support 403-B service under Amtrak.....

HAMMOND/WHITING STATION dedication has been re-scheduled for Oct 23, at which time the new Indiana station will be dedicated to the memory of the late Congressman Adam Benjamin Jr.....

AMERICAN EXPRESS LUXURY train tours, run by 20th Century Rail Tours using private cars on Amtrak trains, are using the following cars for their Sep and Oct tours: car 3222 "Palm Beach" ex-SCL sleeper-lounge; CACV 13, diner, lettered for Susquehanna (ex-Amtrak 8032) (these first two cars are HEP-equipped); New Haven

#552 "Nutmeg State" sleeper-lounge; Southern #2003 "Catawba River" (10-6 sleeper; and dome-obs "Silver Crescent" owned by Gold Coast RR Museum. These cars arrived L.A. on train 1 and left on train 2 the same day, Sep 12. They left New Orleans on train 1 on Oct 6 and left L.A. Oct 10 on train 2.....

BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAY tri-weekly N. Vancouver-Prince George train beginning Oct 31 will run northbd Sunday, Wed & Fri, and southbd Mon, Thurs, & Sat to connect with VIA's SKEENA which runs Prince Rupert-Prince George-Edmonton. A change of stations must be made in Prince George. Reservations and payment are required 2 days in advance; phone 604-987-6216 in Vancouver B.C.....

WISCONSIN DELLS STATION was closed effective Oct 1 due to damage from a freight derailment; tickets must be purchased on board trains.....

LA PLATA, MISSOURI station became permanently unmanned on Oct 1.....

THE NORTH STAR may run more frequently during Thanksgiving & Christmas holidays..

News in this issue is updated thru Oct 14, 1982.

SCHEDULE CHANGES (continued from page 6)

nardino from the Glendale Amtrak station. Caltrans is helping to fund all these new bus connections.

Amtrak bragged that the Oct 31 timetable will show savings of at least 66 hours weekly in scheduled running times around the system. Major timetable cuts are in the NE Corridor, but savings also are made in some long-distance schedules.

The northbound CRESCENT will be 68mins faster, leaving New Orleans at 7:30am and reaching New York at 12:45am the next day. Southbound it will run 50mins faster, leaving New York at 2:35pm and reaching New Orleans at 6:20pm the next day.

The CARDINAL will leave New York at 4:30pm and arrive Chicago at 5:50pm; there is no change in schedule times from Washington west on the train. The eastbound train will depart Chicago at 8:10am and reach New York at 10:45am, over an hour earlier than at present.

To partially replace the BLUE WATER LIMITED, which is eliminated with the coming of the INTERNATIONAL LIMITED, a dedicated bus will connect Flint and Lansing MI with the westbound WOLVERINE and the eastbound TWILIGHT LTD at Battle Creek.

The SUNSET LTD and EAGLE change their tri-weekly days of operation. Los Angeles departures will be Sunday, Wednesday and Friday, and New Orleans departures will be Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. The EAGLE's Chicago departures will be Sunday, Tuesday and Friday.

The EMPIRE BUILDER will leave Seattle at 4:50pm instead of 4:15, and will reach Chicago at 3:50pm instead of 3:15pm. A thru Superliner sleeper will run Chicago-Ogden-Seattle on the SF ZEPHYR and PIONEER. New station stops will be Ephrata WA, Selma NC,and Montgomery WV; Picayune MS will replace Poplarville MS.....

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"This car, originally built in (year) has been modernized, refurbished, and totally rebuilt by the skilled craftsmen at Amtrak's Beech Grove, Indiana, Facility. Placed in service (month, year)."

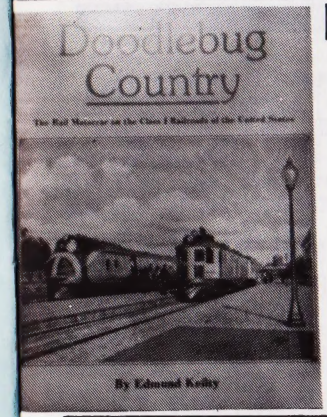
--Amtrak "builder plate" placed in refurbished "Heritage Fleet" cars.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"...I left New Orleans bound for New York on the Crescent... (A)t Anniston, Alabama (the snack bar attendant) wired ahead for diet soft drinks and fresh fruit, which (the porter) brought to my bedroom at Birmingham with a stock of ice."

--Amtrak's Express Magazine, August.

(Are you sure you're on the eastbound train?)



BOOKS

"Doodlebug Country", by Ed Keilty, published Oct 1, is the latest book from Interurbans Publications (Box 6444, Glendale CA 91205). A sequel to Keilty's "Interurbans Without Wires", this volume is the story of the rail motorcar (including Budd RDCs and the early 1930s articulated streamliners) on the Class I railroads of the U.S. This intriguing, 184-p. book is jammed with 197 photos, rosters, maps, etc. Its organization is alphabetical by railroad. It includes a color dust-jacket painting. This book will become a standard reference work on its topic. By mail the price is $28.95 plus $1.50 mailing (& tax in California). Highly recommended.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Nov 5-7: Tourist Railway Ass'n Inc (TRAIN) Tenth Anniversary Convention hosted by Conway Scenic RR at Fox Ridge Resort, North Conway NH. For info, convention hotline: 603-356-5251. D. Smith, Chairmn, Box 947, N. Conway NH 03860.

Nov 6: 20th C RR Club Football Train Chicago-Champaign/Urbana. Coach $42; First Class private obs-tavern-lounge car #48, $88. Side trip to Monticello & Sangamon Valley RWY Museum. Richard Brooks, 8100 S. Rhodes, Chicago IL 60619.

Feb 6, 1983: RAIL-A-RAMA RR show: model train displays, movies, door prizes; at Summerside Lodge, 53 Summer St, Malden MA. Sponsor: Mystic Valley Railway Society, Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126. (617) 361-4445.

Apr 27-May 7, 1983: Canada Fun-Train, start Toronto; 6 nights in hotels (2 Toronto, 2 Banff, 2 Seattle), train Toronto-Vancouver, sightseeing tours at eight locations. Midwest Travel Service, 2936 Bella Vista, Midwest City OK 73110.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

VIA RAIL CANADA, AMTRAK, EURAIL PASS, 20th CENTURY RAIL TOURS - tickets and reservations - WE KNOW HOW! One call does it all. Pay by credit card or check. Tickets mailed directly to you. Contact GREAT WESTERN TOURS, masters of rail travel, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

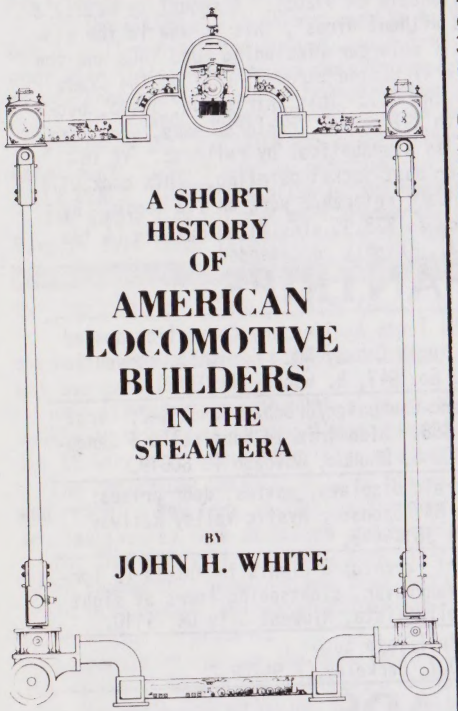
SWISS RAIL TOUR, April 15-23, 1983, from New York City. Write: Rail/Road Tours, Hyde Park Travel Bureau, P.O. Box 24, Hyde Park, MA 02136.

"ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL", RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & postage. Full details will be given later in RTN. Rail Travel News, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

BACK ISSUES OF RTN are always in demand. For your convenience we make available the following complete year volumes at reduced prices: 1981 (Vol. 11, 21 issues) $10; 1980 (Vol. 10 - Tenth Anniversary Year - 18 issues) $8; 1979 (Vol. 9, 15 issues) $5.50; 1978, (Vol. 8, 16 issues) $5.50; 1977 (Vol. 7, 22 issues) $7. Prices postpaid; no tax. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads: only $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

CARS & CONSISTS



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*COAST STARLIGHT, train 14, San Jose Oct 4: engines 229, 231; cars 1134, 39927, 31036, 34083, 33021, 38021, 32042, 32031, private cars 150 "City of Cleveland", 201 "Imperial Sands" with drumhead: "Trans-Rocky Mountain Express"

*SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, train 15, Sacramento Sep 10: engine 240; cars 1126, 2988 "Pine Dale", 20225, 21851, 21815, 21804.

*BROADWAY LIMITED, train 40/440, Hammond/Whiting IN Sep 21: engines 312, 297; cars 1251, 1259, 1137, 1262, 4710, 4708, 8517, 3104, 25066, 25059, 25060, 2080 slumbercoach, 2985, 2920, inspection car 10,000 with Press Secretary James Brady aboard.

*CAPITOL LIMITED, train 441, McKeesport PA Sep 24: engine 277; cars 1216, 1371, 4704, 4705, 2882, 25074, 25071, 28011.

*MERCHANTS LIMITED, train 176, Philadelphia-Boston Sep 20: engines 936 AEM-7, off at New Haven), 309 (F40, on at New Haven); cars 21062, 21079, 21054, 21093, 20126.

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PRR Keystone Whistle Post Sign prototype-$90 - repainted $105
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MOVING?
Be sure to notify RTN of your new address as soon as possible. Don't rely on the Postal Service to forward your mail!

LETTERS (continued from page 2)

European second class--it won't pay. You spend some more time in Albany switching and make it up in New York State and Western Ohio and Indiana on 90mph track, which Conrail's main line has. You provide a first class section with bedrooms, roomettes, economy bedrooms--one or two cars of these (sort of one-floor Superliner design), a first class club car--maybe a rebuilt dome lounge (it'll take the clearance on the Boston-Chicago line), and a first class dining car (possibly combined with first class club lounge); and then like the airlines, you provide a coach section with comfortable new stretchout reclining seating, coach lounge car and coach dinette table service. Combine the first class Boston and New York sections in Albany, and the coach sections in Albany. Then you have again a first class high-speed railliner. It's worth a try. Then in the mid- or late 1980s, a day train from New York to Chicago.

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R. D. McCombs
Chesterland, Ohio

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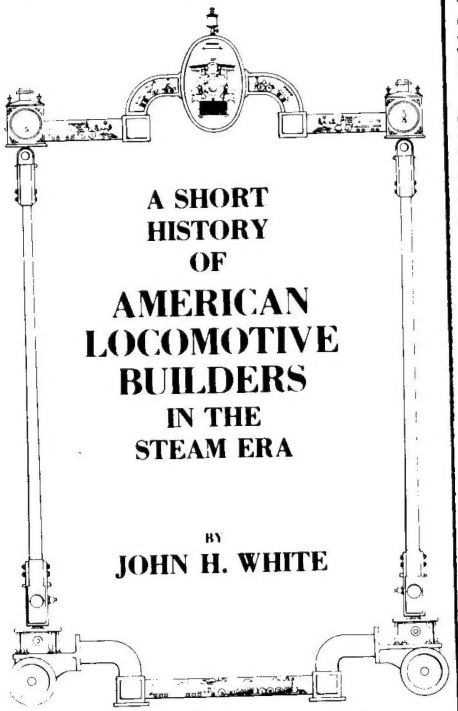

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